



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Officials anticipate increase in forest fires due to forecast *Spring forest fire season underway*

Frankfort, Ky. (March 30, 2015) – The Division of Forestry is reminding Kentuckians that it is spring forest fire hazard season.

Since March 16, the division has battled more than 98 forest fires, damaging more than 1,320 acres. This week's weather forecast is cause for concern. "The forecast for warmer, dryer weather this week has the division concerned about the potential for an additional increase in forest fires," said Leah W. MacSwords, Kentucky's state forester.

Arson is the cause of the majority of the forest fires in Kentucky, and the division actively investigates the cause of any wildfire. Through its partnership with the Kentucky State Police and Kentucky Department of Corrections, bloodhounds will be used to track arsonists. But along with arson, many fires are caused by people burning debris (trash, leaves, yard waste, etc.) and not taking precautions.

State law prohibits burning in or within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland, except between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. Residents who cause a fire to spread may be held liable for fire suppression costs incurred by the state and county and for damage to property resulting from such fires.

Reporting any unusual activity to local law enforcement can help put a stop to wildfires. For questions about local restrictions regarding burning, call the local fire department and the Division for Air Quality at 502-564-3999.

For more information about fire hazard seasons, outdoor burning laws and safe burning practices, contact the Kentucky Division of Forestry at 1-800-866-0555 or visit the division's web site at <http://forestry.ky.gov>.

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Editor's Note: The mission of the Kentucky Division of Forestry is to protect and enhance the forest resources of the Commonwealth. The agency is responsible for preventing and suppressing wildfires on state and private lands as well as providing assistance to landowners and communities for the purpose of sustaining the health, diversity and productivity of our forests to meet the needs of present and future generations.